

**MEMORIAL**

OF

**THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA,**

PRAYING RELIEF FOR THOSE

**PURCHASERS OF THE PUBLIC LANDS THEREIN**

THAT HAVE IMPROVED THE SAME.

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DECEMBER 11, 1820.

Printed by order of the Senate of the United States,

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WASHINGTON:

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1820.

1887

MEMORIAL

TO THE

THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA

FOR THE YEAR 1887

WASHINGTON

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE

## MEMORIAL.

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

*The Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Alabama*  
RESPECTFULLY REPRESENT,

That, upon the petition of their constituents, they are induced to address this memorial to your honorable body, under the fullest confidence that the strong reasons here detailed will not fail to produce their just influence in your deliberations upon a subject of such vital importance to a large portion of the citizens of the United States. Circumstances beyond the control of human wisdom have changed the fair face of our national prosperity, and, from the highest elevation, we are suddenly depressed to a point of stagnant uncertainty, where we remain in doubt, whether we shall again ascend to our former rank, or descend to a still lower stage of declension. At the close of the late war with Great Britain, the establishment of a general peace, and the consequent revival of commerce throughout the world, cotton, the staple article of this state, rose to a very high price, and obtained ready sale in European markets. Shortly after this period, the country was inundated with the notes of various state banks, and a very large amount of Mississippi stock was also in circulation, and obtainable upon easy and accommodating terms to purchasers; which stock, by law, had been made receivable in payment for public land in the state of Mississippi, and the then territory of Alabama. Amidst circumstances so propitious for the United States, and unfortunate for the citizens of this infant state, was a portion of the public land within our limits offered for sale by the government of the United States. Attracted by the fertility of our soil, and stimulated by the desire of participating in the great profits which the growing of cotton promised to the planter, people from every quarter thronged the public sales, loaded with bank notes and Mississippi stock. The consequences were such, as the circumstances were naturally calculated to produce; the land sold for prices unparalleled in the annals of public sales, and an immense debt is now owing by the citizens to the government. The untried results of a general peace have baffled the calculations of the most prudent and sagacious merchants in the world. A general derangement of the money system has taken place, commerce has languished, our staple commodity has fallen to less than half the price it maintained at the

time of those sales; most of the state banks, then in high credit, have since failed, and others, to protect themselves from a similar fate, have been compelled to curtail their discounts, and call in their notes from circulation; even the Bank of the United States, which promised, in its commencement, a sound and safe circulation, and an equality of exchange, has also been constrained to diminish the circulation of its notes until they are as scarce as gold and silver, which we rarely see. The metallic currency of the country is locked up in the vaults of the banks, and the community is left without a currency for the ordinary purposes of trade. In addition to all these adverse circumstances, a law was passed by your honorable body, at your last session, changing the mode of selling the public land, reducing the *minimum* price to one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre, and requiring the whole purchase money to be paid in advance. Although this law may be wise and politic, its operation upon those who purchased before its passage is peculiarly hard, and, when added to the other circumstances enumerated, becomes oppressive. Land, under the late law, sells for less than former purchasers paid for the first instalment of land only, equal in quality and situation. By examining the surveyor's notes, and the register's and receiver's returns, it will be seen, that land in Colbert's reserve, equal in quality and situation, sold in October last for less than one fourth of the price given in March, 18 8, for the adjacent land. This prevents former purchasers from partially relieving themselves by selling a part of the land purchased, even at a loss of half the instalment paid. For none will purchase land at a high price, while it can be had so cheap. Your memorialists, therefore, believe, that a great portion of their petitioners never can pay for their land at the prices they have agreed to give. And, unless your honorable body will pass a law, granting them competent relief, they must fall victims to the change of times, and the change of policy adopted by the general government. They have penetrated the forests but to make plantations and dwellings for their more fortunate fellow-citizens, who have remained in the enjoyments of social comforts, until this epoch, so disastrous to our citizens, shall arrive. Many of them ventured into this new country and purchased land for the permanent settlement of themselves and their children, hoping, that, while they remained on this side of time, they might pay for the land: and secure to their wives and children the fruits of their labor, when the great author of their being should call them hence. All these pleasing hopes are now dashed to the ground; and nothing can revive them, but a generous interference on the part of your honorable body. Your memorialists, therefore, respectfully pray, that a law may be passed by your honorable body, granting such relief as may be best suited to the circumstances of our petitioners, and the policy of the general government. And we would further represent, that there is another class of citizens among us, who have greatly promoted the interest of the general government, by improving lands unsold: and, for the want of capital, are unable to purchase lands at such prices as the lands have heretofore

sold, and now continue to sell for; we would, therefore, humbly represent the propriety of granting that relief to those who have improved public lands, as may be deemed expedient.

*Resolved*, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the state of Alabama, in general assembly convened, That a copy of this memorial be forwarded to each of our Senators, and one to our Representative in Congress; and they are hereby requested to use their best exertions to obtain for our fellow-citizens the relief prayed for.

G. W. OWEN,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

GABRIEL MOORE,

*President of the Senate.*

Approved, November 22d, 1820.

THOMAS BIBB.

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ALABAMA EXECUTIVE OFFICE,

*November 22d, 1820.*

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy from the original deposits in my office.

THOMAS A. ROGERS,

*Secretary of State.*

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present the property of existing that belong to those who have im-  
proved public lands, as may be deemed expedient.

Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the State  
of Alabama, in General Assembly convened, That a copy of this res-  
olution be forwarded to each of our Senators, and one to our Repre-  
sentative in Congress, and they are hereby requested to use their  
best exertions to obtain for our fellow citizens the aforesaid public

G. W. OWEN,

Speaker of the House of Representatives

GABRIEL MOORE,

President of the Senate

Approved, November 23d, 1820.

THOMAS HUBB,

ALABAMA EXECUTIVE OFFICE,

November 23d, 1820.

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy from the origi-  
nal deposited in my office.

THOMAS A. ROGERS,

Secretary of State.